



**DARK
HORSE
MANGA**

BLADE OF THE
IMMORTAL

128 \$2.99 US

BADGER HOLE
1 of 4



HIROAKI SAMURA

BLADE

OF THE IMMORTAL

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BLADE

OF THE IMMORTAL

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CAST OF CHARACTERS



MANJI

Immortal shinin, vowed to protect him and aid him in her quest for revenge.



RIN

Last heir of the Muterachi-ryū dōjō which was destroyed by the Itō-ryū.



**HABAIKI
KAGIMURA**

Powerful bangeshin, serving the shōgun and seeking the secret of immortality.



DŌA

A small, brash Itō-ryū warrior, quick on his feet and eager to brawl.



ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard, a hefty Itō-ryū warrior arrested for a street fight Dōa started.



BURANDO

Detached doctor and pioneer in kessen-chū transference.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by kessen-chū, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell beneath Edo Castle, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaiki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Kagimura's demented lead doctor, Burando, increases the speed of the experiments as his sanity slips away. While searching for Manji and Isaku, Rin and Dōa stumble across a mountain of dead bodies and a simple-minded beggar who leads them to the "Badger Hole," an entrance to the underground tunnel system that runs beneath Edo Castle and possibly to Kagimura's cruel prisons. The ladies prepare for a prison break . . . !



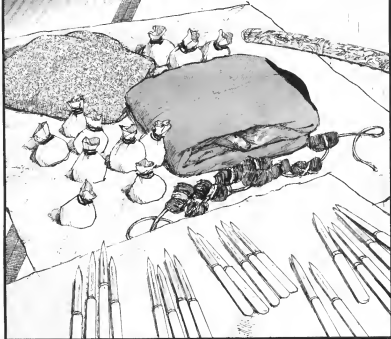
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無限の住人

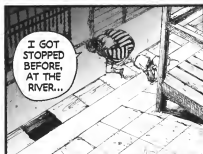


BADGER HOLE
-part one-



RIN,
I'M
GOING ON
AHEAD.

HN?!



I GOT
STOPPED
BEFORE,
AT THE
RIVER...



...BUT
TODAY...

...I'M
GOING
TO
KILL.



THE
TOSHU
SAYS IT'S
OKAY...

...IF YOU'RE
PROTECTING
SOMEONE YOU
CARE FOR,
SO ANYONE
WHO BLOCKS
ME--
DEAD.









PLEASE
LISSSEN,
SIR.

MY
MAMA'S
GOT SICK.
EVEN IF
I KIN'T GET
A DOC...



...I
THOUGHT,
IF I KIN
GET 'ER
SOME GOOD,
FILLIN' GRUB...
OH BOO
HOO HOO!



I
HEAR YOU,
AND YET...

...WE
ALREADY
HAVE MORE
HANDS THAN
WE NEED.



WELL, GO
IN AND SEE
IF YOUR
PALS WILL
TRADE.

IF THEY
SAY NO,
THAT'S
IT.

I
OWES
YOU,
SIR!



THANKS.

THANKS.

THANKS.



HRMM?!



HOLD IT.
HOLD IT!

WHO ARE
THESE TWO?!

ULP!

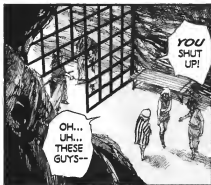


WE'RE...

...N-
NEW-
BIES...



"NEW-
BIES"...?



YOU
SHUT
UP!

OH...
UH...
THESE
GUYS--



WHEN
YOU
STAND
HERE
ALL DAY,
YOU SEE
ALL
KINDS.



MIXED IN
WITH THE
BEGGARS IN
THEIR STINKING
RAGS, YOU GET
FOLK WHO
AREN'T
LIKE THAT.

AND WHEN
I QUESTION
THEM, THEY'LL
BE NEW TO
THE **LIFE...**



...OR
**HOME-
LESS,**
SENT BY
BROKERS.

BUT!



**YOU
TWO?**

DRESSED
IN RAGS,
BUT WITH-
OUT THE
STENCH?
YOU'RE A
FIRST.



COME
OUT
HERE.

YOU'LL
NEED
A **BODY
CHECK.**



I SAID
COME
HERE!



WHAT'RE
YOU
DOING?!



COME
ONE!









**HEAR
ME!**

WE HAVE
NO
QUARREL
WITH THE
**SHŌGUN-
ATE!**



ONLY, WE
HAVE LOST
**LOVED
ONES** TO
THE EXCESSES
OF THE
**METSUKE
AND SAN-
MAWARI!!**

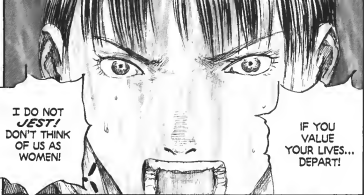
WE COME
HERE, LED BY
RUMOR,
THAT THEY
ARE HELD
WITHIN THIS
TUNNEL!



**OUR
GOAL IS
TO TAKE
BACK OUR
COM-
RADES!
NOTHING
MORE!**

WE HAVE
**NO
DESIRE
TO CROSS
BLADES**
WITH YOU,
HONORED SIRSI!
YET IF IT
COMES TO
THAT...

...KNOW
THAT
OUR SWORD
SKILLS
**FAR
EXCEED**
YOUR OWN!



I DO NOT
JEST!
DON'T THINK
OF US AS
WOMEN!

IF YOU
VALUE
YOUR LIVES...
DEPART!

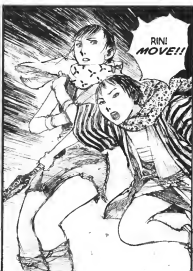


AHH...
NO
GOOD!

THAT
WON'T
STOP
THEM...

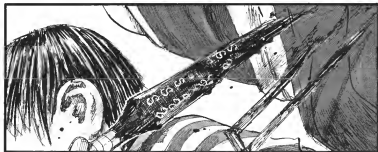


INTRUDERS,
YOU
TALK
BIG!

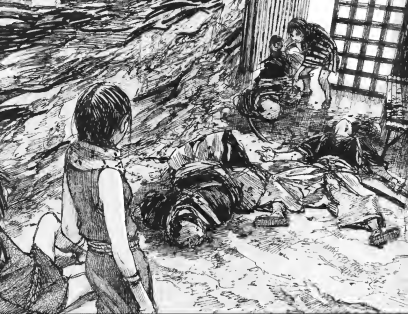


RINI!
MOVE!!











A close-up of a character with short dark hair, wearing a scarf with a Y-shaped pattern. They have a slight, knowing smile.

THE
PLAN WAS
TO DISGUISE
OURSELVES.
FOLLOW YOUR
FRIENDS WHO
WORK THIS
HOLE...

...LEARN
THE
SHORTEST
ROUTE
TO EDO
CASTLE...

...THEN
GATHER
OUR
WEAPONS
AND HEAD
IN **FOR**
REAL.

Three characters are on a rocky shore. One is sitting on the ground, another is kneeling and bowing, and a third is standing with their back to the viewer, looking out at the sea.

SHEESH, RIN!!
COULDN'T YOU EVEN
STOP THOSE **BEG-**
GARS WHILE I WAS
FIGHTING?

I'M
SORRY!
YOU'RE RIGHT--
TOTALLY.

A character with short dark hair is shown in profile, covering their mouth with their hand as if they are shocked or trying to suppress a reaction.

BUT
AT LEAST
THEY RAN
OUT-
SIDE.

THAT'S
BETTER THAN
ALERTING THE
GUARDS...

A character with short dark hair has a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression of shock or panic.

BETTER,
NO-
THING!

WHAT
DO WE
DO
NOW?!

A large close-up of a character's face. They have a serious, determined expression and are looking slightly to the side. A single drop of sweat is visible on their forehead.

I GUESS
WE'LL
HAVE TO...
FEEL
OUR
WAY...





THE
CASTLE'S
THAT
WAY,
ABOUT
ONE RI.



BUT
IF IT'S A
LABYRINTH...
OR THERE'RE
OBSTA-
CLES...

IF THE
TUNNEL'S
STRAIGHT,
IT WON'T
TAKE US
ONE
KOKU.



...IT
COULD
TAKE
ALL DAY,
OR
MORE...



DŌA.



THERE
WASN'T
TIME
EARLIER...

...BUT
PLEASE
PROMISE
ME...



...IF
YORIKI
OR *DŌSHIN*
TRY TO
BLOCK US...

...THINK
FIRST
AND TRY TO
AVOID
A FIGHT,
OKAY?



BUT...
THIS
MORNING...
YOU
SAID--

OF
COURSE...

...IF WE
CAN'T
FIND A WAY,
THEN IT'S *NO*
HOLDS
BARRED.

BUT THIS
IS FOR
YOUR OWN
GOOD!

YOU'RE
AS STRONG
AS A
DEMON...



IF
YOU'RE
DOWN
THERE
HACKING
AWAY
NON-
STOP--

...BUT
YOU'RE
NOT BLESSED
WITH
UNENDING
ENDUR-
ANCE.

NON-
SENSE!
WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?!

RIN, YOU
ARE SO
TEDIOUS!
DON'T YOU
EVER GET
SERIOUS?

I AM NOT
TEDIOUS...
AND I'M
TOTALLY
SERIOUS.

IF *YOU*
GET
INJURED,
IT'S *ALL*
OVER.

THE *TŌSHU*
SAID KILLING'S
OKAY AT
TIMES
LIKE THIS.

THE
TŌSHU'S
RIGHTER
THAN
YOU,
RIN!

THAT'S
NOT
THE
POIN--





...DŌA!

I HAVEN'T
TOLD YOU,
HAVE I? HOW
I **TRAVELED**
WITH ANOTSU
KAGEHISA, JUST
THE **TWO** OF US,
FOR A LITTLE
WHILE?



...EH?!



LIAR!

TRUE!



WHEN
YOU GET
BACK,
JUST ASK
HIM.

MOREOVER,
WE WERE
ON THE
RUN.

AND ONCE, WHEN
THEY ALMOST HAD
US SURROUNDED...?
YOUR **TŌSHU-**
SAMA SAID **THIS,**
A WHOLE LOT MORE
DELIBERATE-
LY THAN I...



..."THE
GREATEST
SAGE IS
HE WHO
AVOIDS
BATTLE.

"HE WHO
FIGHTS
AND WINS
COMES
NEXT."





UNLIKE
YOU, DŌA,
I DON'T
RESPECT
ANOTSU
KAGEHISA IN
THE LEAST.

BUT
AT THAT
MOMENT,
EVEN
I THOUGHT,
"WOW.
SO *THAT'S*
THE MEASURE
OF A LEADER
OF MEN."



THE
TŌSHU
SAID
THAT...?



...UHHN...
I GET
IT.

IF THE
TŌSHU
SAYS SO,
THEN I
GUESS...



~ukewf!~

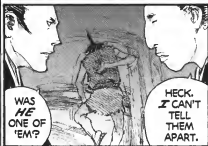


WELL,
HE DIDN'T
ACTUAL-
LY SAY
IT...

WHITE
LIES
DON'T
COUNT...

TŌSHU!
WATCH
ME, YOU
HEAR?!









SORTA
LIKE
THAT?



CLOSE
ENOUGH.
THANKS...

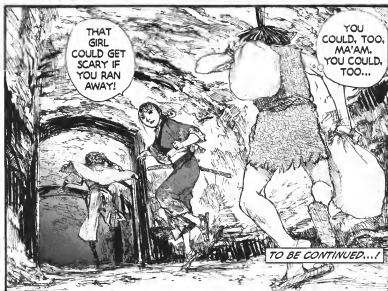


IT'S
KINDA
BORING.

IT'S
NINPŌ.
"KILL
WITH
KIND-
NESS."

OH,
PLEASE
CARRY OUR
BAGS...?

UHH...
YES'M!



THAT
GIRL
COULD GET
SCARY IF
YOU RAN
AWAY!

YOU
COULD, TOO,
MA'AM.
YOU COULD,
TOO...

TO BE CONTINUED...!

GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshū*.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself

Dōshin: Low ranking police officers

Itō-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Koku: Unit of time: approximately two hours.

Komo: Beggars. In this issue Rin uses the honorifics "O-" and "-SAN" with komo, perhaps because of a natural respect for anyone, regardless of their class or social stature.

Metsuke: Edo-era inspectors who were responsible for

watching the actions and decisions of the *daimyō* (feudal lords). They acted as a sort of intelligence agency for the shogun.

Mutenchi-ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Ninpo: Fighting tactics of the *ninja*

Ri: Edo Period unit of measurement.

Sannowari: Also known as "the three patrols," the *sannowari* were three groups of *dōshin* who performed specific patrol and criminal investigation duties.

Tōshū: Leader, master

Yoriki: Ranked below the *machi hugyō* and above the *dōshin*, the *yoriki* were high-ranking police officers in Edo.

JHOMAR SORIANO

ON THE EVILS UNDER EDO





MUGEN NO JUNIN

by Scott Cook, Portland, Oregon

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